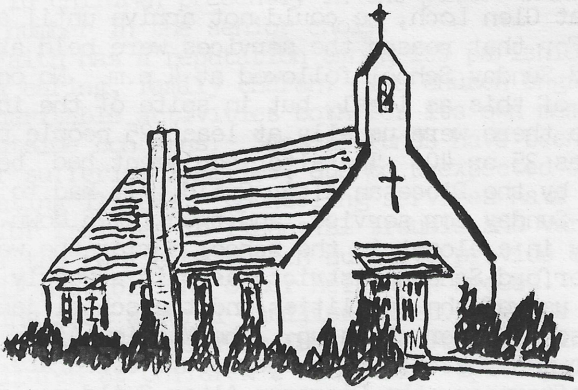
ST. FAITH CHURCH
1932 - 1982

St. Faith Episcopal Church ~ founded 1932 ~ Havertown, PA.



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About 1920 some families in Penfield and Brookline began to meet to talk and plan and dream of an Episcopal Church in their own neighborhood. Many of them attended churches in Philadelphia, Upper Darby, Ardmore, and other surrounding communities; but none of the churches were near enough for active participation in the social life of church. These meetings became more numerous with more families involved until in May 1931 a petition was carried to the Convocation of Chester asking to start a church. With the help from the very Reverend Charles Schreiner, Dean of the Convocation of Chester, and his associate at the Church Farm School at Glen Loch, the Reverend Willam Powell, the group moved forward more rapidly. The first service of the Mission was held on January 10, 1932 in the assembly hall of Brookline School on Earlington Avenue. Mr. Powell served as minister to the Mission. Because of his

duties at Glen Loch, he could not arrive until afternoon. For that reason the services were held at 2:30 p.m. and Sunday School followed at 4 p.m. No one thought of this as ideal, but in spite of the inconvenience there were usually at least 25 people present, sometimes 35 or 40. The altar equipment had been lent to them by the Diocesan Altar Guild. It had to be set up each Sunday for service, and then taken down and put away in a closet in the school during the week. The Haverford School District was paid a weekly charge for the use of the facilities and the school janitors were also paid for clean up. The Mission Altar Guild was informed that although they could celebrate Easter in the afternoon, the Diocesan Altar Guild would not permit its equipment to be used for an afternoon Easter service. Consequently special effort was made and the Easter service was held in the morning with a congregation about double the usual.

Shortly after Easter they were told by Dean Schreiner that Mr. Powell was unavailable, there was no money to help them get started and they would have to disband. With this sad news they did not hold a service the first Sunday of May; but they were determined not to lose a good beginning. They reasoned that the Bishop, who had given them permission to start, had not told them to disband. So they continued to meet. Arrangements were made for a seminarian, Alan Brown, to conduct their services. Mr. Brown was eventually to become the Bishop of Albany many years later. The vicar of St. George, Ardmore, was helpful in getting a priest to conduct Holy Communion service for them once a month.

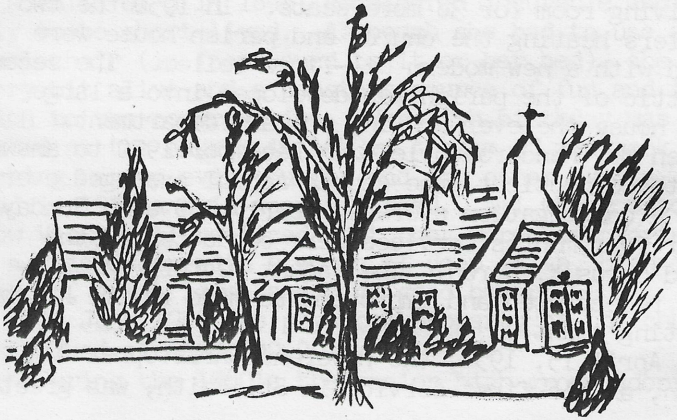
With such determination shown, Dean Schreiner changed his tune, but told them they must pledge to raise at least one thousand dollars in order to buy land and start a church building. This pledge was gladly taken, although with trepidation. They set about raising the money. Numerous generous contributions were made, and many parties held to raise money - Cootie parties (one held by Marge Ehrmann, later Schmidt), card parties, suppers, etc. The men's group made a canvass of the area and found 175 families which showed interest in having

an Episcopal Church in the area. The first baby of the Mission congregation to be baptised was John Wittman, in May 1932. Since there was no baptismal font available at the school, his parents, Charles and Carolyn Wittman, took him to Glen Loch where he was baptised by Mr. Powell.

With this enthusiasm and hopeful prospects for the future Bishop Taitt aided with the purchase of the land in September by soliciting funds from other sources and contributing $500.00 himself. On October 6 (St. Faith's Patronal Feast - a prophetic coincidence) he met with the congregation personally. The name, St. Faith, was given to the Mission at the Convocation of Chester Meeting late in October.

On November 12, 1932, ground was broken for the Chapel. Bishop Taitt officiated, turning over the first ground. Over 100 attended the service. There was a vested choir of 20, some of them from the boys' choir of the Church Farm School. The first $1000.00 payment on the Chapel (which they had worked so hard to raise) was made at that time.

On February 12, 1933 the first service was held in the new Chapel. It was built to hold 125 people, but at the very first service there were 148 present. Growth was so rapid that the Parish House was added in 1934. It contained church school rooms, sacristy, office, and a full basement with a kitchen. The Chapel had cost about $3000.00. This addition was double that.



In 1937 the rectory was purchased. After four years of commuting day after day, Mr. Powell could now bring his family to live next door to the Church.

With materials given by Robert Bell, Jr., as a memorial for his father, the people of St. Faith finished the basement room. On October 1938 Bishop Taitt dedicated the room as the Thomas Robert Bell Memorial. In June 1939 Bishop Taitt was again at St. Faith to dedicate the Alfred Harrison Memorial planting of laurel, rhododendron, abelia, dogwood, spruce and elm. By the end of 1942 complete equipment had been procured for the church, all indebtedness was cleared, and the property was valued at $40,000.00

World War II took its toll of St. Faith. Mr. Powell left in 1943 to become an Army Chaplain. His replacement, the Reverend Sheldon Davis, left at the end of 1944 to become a navy Chaplin. The first six months of 1945 were dismal. Church funds were so low that there wasn't always money to buy coal to heat the church. Sometimes there wasn't a supply priest to hold a service. At the Bishop's ultimatum, an every member canvass was held to prove the church could support a vicar. On June 1, 1945, the Reverend Aaron Manderbach arrived, an answer to everyone's prayers.

He was vicar for only four and a half years, but he and the congregation achieved great progress during that time. In May 1946 at the Diocesan Convention approval was given for the Mission to become a Parish, with incorporation in Delaware County Courts taking place on April 25, 1947. Attendance had grown so that building changes were made, including an added vestibule, giving room for 36 more seats. In 1950 the two old boilers heating the church and parish house were replaced with a new modern oil-fired boiler. The second floor attic of the parish was developed into a large room to house the ever-growing primary department.

When Mr. Manderbach left in December 1950 to answer a call to Connecticut, the church school averaged over 140 and a congregation averaged nearly 100 each Sunday.

For four months services were conducted by the Reverend Cyrus K. Heron. The vacant rectory was completely redecorated and improvements made to the kitchen and heating plant.

On April 15, 1951, the Reverend Christopher J. Atkinson, at his first service in St. Faith, was greeted

by a record congregation. During his first year the eleven o'clock service attendance increased by about fifty percent. In 1952 the church was lengthened, adding 72 more seats. Ceiling was raised to the peak of the roof, new lights and new pews installed; the total cost was oversubscribed before the work was completed. In 1953 the kitchen was redone.

Also in 1953 the St. Faith Weekday Kindergarten was begun with an enrollment of 35 and a staff of three. During the years enrollment has soared at times to as high as 125. When Havertown instituted public kindergarten, the St. Faith school became a nursery school only. Expansion of the church included improvement of the nursery school facilities. In 1982 summer sessions were added. Many of St. Faith's own Parish children have benefited by attendance at the weekday school. State approved, it is considered one of the finest nursery schools in the area.

In 1955, in spite of the additions, congregational growth was such that plans were begun to build a new, larger church on the unoccupied church property. Nearly $100,000.00 was raised in 1956 for this purpose. Ground was broken in 1957. The new church had seating for 300 people, a large narthex, full basement, large kitchen, undercroft and office. The original church was to be used as an assembly hall and for the nursery. It is now called the "bike" room. The first service was held on Easter 1958.

In May 1961 a remarkable woman, Victoria DeMar, became a member of St. Faith. She was unique. She was a resident of Inglis House, having been left there as a child of 5 in 1898, considered incurable and probably to be short-lived. Although she had to use a wheel-chair (in fact bound to it or her bed), she was every bit alive and a constant source of fun and inspiration to the congregation. Her 80th birthday was celebrated at the church in 1973. A team of men took turns picking her up every Sunday and for other events. She died in 1977 and is deeply missed. All who got to know Vicky well realized that they were most fortunate in a friendship with a woman of deep faith, high intelligence, great love, and high good humor.

In June 1962 the physical property of the church was valued at $300,000.00.

During the 1960's the senior high group adopted

a Korean orphan (financially, that is) and all the congregation helped them raise money for the child's support.

John Hoover was the first member of St. Faith Parish to become a seminarian in 1963. The church gave him financial support of $500.00 a year for each of his three years in seminary.

During the early 1960s the church was home for the Delaware County Opera Company.

In 1965 an active Fish group was formed and offered its services to the Havertown area. In the fall of 1966 Joseph A. Williams, Seminarian, came to assist the Rector.

Reverend Christopher Atkinson retired after 20 years service in 1970. He lives now at Martha's Vineyard, Mass., serving, of all things, in a Baptist church. He visits us occasionally and his coming is always a reason for great joy.

The Reverend Robert S. Snyder was instituted as Rector in December, 1970, and he is the present Rector. He began the monthly newsletter, FAITH ALIVE, that month. It is looked forward to, giving Church happenings, births, deaths, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, other news about parishioners, frequently informative articles, cartoons, and games to play.

In 1980-1981 St. Faith joined with the other churches in the Conestoga Deanery to support a Vietnamese refugee family. They have since left the area to live among other Vietnamese in Los Angeles, California.

The Reverend Lynette Burley McNally, who grew up in St. Faith and whose parents, John and Edith Burley, still attend church, joined the vanguard of women priests in the Episcopal Church, being invested at Trinity Church, Cranford, New Jersey, in February 1982. She has ministered to her old parish several times, always bringing us a message worth hearing.

Music has been important at St. Faith from the beginning. Mrs. Vida McClenaghen served as the first choirmaster. A portable organ was used at the Groundbreaking ceremony in 1952. Other choirmasters have been Thomas Bell, Mr. McClees, Mr. Paul Kaufman, 1971-1981, who presented the choir in many beautiful musical programs and who can play any hymn in the hymnal just by being told the hymn number (he is still a member of the congregation). Mr. Jim Schlecta is the present organist-choirmaster. There

are about 10 children presently in the junior choir, and a similar number in the senior choir.

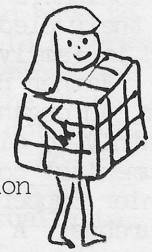
St. Faith has a reputation among its parishioners of being a caring, family church. The church engages in many charitable activities both for its own members and for outside concerns. Special funds have been raised for suffering families, due to unexpected death or devastating illness. Counseling services have been provided for families in financial trouble and various members of the Parish have been quick to provide employment if possible and other help when needed. Thanksgiving sees several families aided. "White Gifts" are given each year prior at Christmas for distribution to the children at Children's hospital. Episcopal Hospital is another hospital which receives financial and volunteer support from time to time. In addition to giving of time and money for various programs, individual members of the congregation are known for the help they have given to others. During the nationwide three year campaign, "Venture in Mission," St. Faith Parishioners contributed about $20,000.00 in addition to their pledges. A food cupboard is maintained to aid in family emergencies.

Father Bob is a member of the Havertown Ministerium, an organization of Havertown pastors which meets monthly to discuss and work on community, hospital, and ecumenical concerns. St. Faith is active also in the Senior Supper Club, which meets monthly in various churches. A dinner is provided at modest cost followed by a program put on by the host church (a popular program at St. Faith several years ago was a group sing, with music by Paul Kaufman). Another shared activity is a Good Friday Service which is held at a different Havertown Church each year. On July 4th and Labor Day Union Methodist Church, which is catty-corner to St. Faith, has shared services, both congregations meeting on the lawns, alternatively, of each church.

The Diocesan Film Library is an important activity which is housed in St. Faith. It is an audio-visual resource library which is a cooperative ecumenical effort. Member churches of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Diocese of New Jersey, and the Philadelphia Baptist Association contribute to its maintenance. Any church may join, paying an annual

membership fee and a postage credit. Mr. Snyder is one of the four members of a "Services and Resources" team. His wife, Ann, mans the library Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Many social activities are enjoyed at St. Faith. The Men's Club provides a pancake breakfast the first Sunday of each month (except in summer). A Coffee Hour is enjoyed the second Sunday. Children have Sunday School classes every Sunday and adult classes are held every 2nd and 4th Sundays. Square dances, progressive dinners, covered dish suppers, bazaars, flea markets, theater parties, travel programs are among the activities enjoyed. A few years ago a Parish cookbook was produced. Recently, in October, a cootie party was held, reminiscent of 1932. Many craft sales are held, for St. Faith has many artists with paint brushes, paste pot, crochet hook, sewing and knitting needles, etc. The next one will be December 4th. Hallowe'en is celebrated every year with a parade to show off costumes. Father Bob isn't always recognized when he dons a horrible mask and wears his black hooded cape. At Christmas we enjoy everything: Children's pageant, Jesus' birthday cake, Santa Claus and a pinata, and the service at midnight.



St. Faith is still alive with the same enthusiasm that saw its beginning as a Mission in 1932. It is a thrill that we still have with us Marge Ehrmann Schmidt and Carolyn Wittman to tell us what it was like. Marge's mother, Anna Ehrmann, still remembers those beginning days, although she can no longer leave her bed. What a wonderful continuity and heritage we all enjoy in St. Faith Church.

Addenda: The following facts were learned too late for insertion in the proper chronological location:

1. The Reverend Sheldon Davis was ordained at St. Faith Church in 1943.

2. John Wittman's real name is Charles P. Wittman, but his parents and everyone else call him John, except when he is called "Tobo".

St. Faith was a Virgin Saint who as a child suffered martyrdom at Agen, in Aquitania, during the persecution of Diocletian. When brought before her judges and asked what religion she was of, she replied, "From a child I have served the Lord Jesus with all my heart, I confess his name and commit myself to him with entire devotion." The magistrate urged her to withdraw her confession and when she refused ordered her to be burnt to death on a brazen grate.

SYMBOLS: Palm Branch - Grate